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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8901
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC//NSC// PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000015

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/27/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT TIKRIT: LOCAL POLITICIANS "REJECT IDEA" OF A
NATIONAL MODERATE FRONT

REF: BAGHDAD 4651

Classified By: Stephanie Miley, PRT Team Leader, for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

11. (U) This is a PRT Tikrit, Salah ad Din cable.

12. (C) SUMMARY. At a December 26 political roundtable, keyed-in Salah ad Din (SaD) politicians (all Sunni Arabs) "rejected the idea" that a national moderate front - potentially comprising SCIRI, Dawa, KDP, PUK, and IIP - could effectively work together and govern the country. Saying they had heard nothing through official party channels and had learned of the potential moderate political party grouping through the media, the group of Provincial Council members and local politicians termed the idea "another Coalition Forces-inspired attempt to fix a broken process." They asserted that the grouping of parties could not work together because their specific interests were too different and that if a moderate front did emerge, it would not last long because "the parties have not been communicating their true interests to one another." They also expressed the view that a moderate front could be very damaging to the political process by pushing Iraq into a "Lebanese-style, sectarian-based democracy." Conceding that Iraq's political parties were too weak to handle the current sectarian environment, they suggested a strong, secular leader (like former PM Ayad Allawi) backed by a nonpartisan "salvation" government was the way forward for Iraq's democracy. If a moderate front does emerge, it is clear that it will have little backing among local politicians in Salah ad Din without serious lobbying by the respective parties' national leaders at the provincial level. END SUMMARY.

At the Roundtable

13. (C) On December 26 at a PRT-initiated political roundtable, Provincial Council (PC) members Jassim Shaki Abdullah and Dhamin Ulaiwi Mutlag, Political Action Committee Secretary Dr. Nuri Mohammad Dhahir, SaD IIP representative Hashem Jihad, and local politician Johar Hamad Haham (all Sunni Arabs) met to discuss the possibility of a national moderate front, potentially comprising SCIRI, Dawa, KDP, PUK, and IIP. All, including those affiliated with parties that may join the

moderate front, said they had heard nothing official from their respective parties about the potential political grouping and had learned of the possibility through the media.

Rejecting the Idea of a Moderate Political
Front

¶4. (C) The roundtable participants "rejected the idea" that the grouping of political parties could work together and govern the country, terming it "another Coalition Forces-inspired attempt to fix a broken process." They said the current disarray in the national political scene was a result of the Bremer Administration's "poor planning" which has led to "poor achievements."

¶5. (C) In the view of the keyed-in politicians, the moderate front could not function with the potential composition of political parties because the party's interests were too different. If the parties were able to form an alliance, they surmised, it would be short-lived and resulting from a lack of the parties "communicating their true interests to one another." They questioned "who the leaders on the ground" would be.

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Moderate Front Seen as a Step toward a
"Lebanese-Style Democracy"

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¶6. (C) They also asserted that formation of such a moderate front, based on sectarian parties, could be damaging to the political process. They assessed that it would push Iraq into a Lebanese-style, sectarian-based democracy that would not be able to function as a national government. They conceded that Iraq's national political parties are weak and suggested that was a potential source of the nation's current sectarian dilemma.

¶7. (C) They said that if the U.S. was serious about fixing Iraq's "broken political process" it would support a strong, secular leader, "like Ayad Allawi who is Shia but secular," and would repeal all of the Bremer Administration legislation. They recommended that a "salvation" government, with no political affiliations be elected to the nation's leadership. As Iraq's democracy strengthened, possibly after two years, they suggested, political parties could be introduced.

Frustrated by Lack of Clear U.S. Policy

¶8. (C) They also expressed frustration with what they perceive as the U.S.'s lack of a clear policy on Iraq. They recognized that the Bush Administration was undergoing a policy review and would set forth its agenda on Iraq in early 2007. They welcomed re-convening a similar political roundtable at that time to discuss the new policy.

Comment

¶9. (C) The individuals at the roundtable were among Salah ad Din's most active politicians and keyed-in individuals. Their views are generally representative of those in the province involved in the political process, and their forthright rejection of a potential moderate front was strong. If a national moderate front does emerge, it is clear that it will have little backing among local politicians in Salah ad Din without serious lobbying by the respective parties' national leaders at the provincial level. END COMMENT.

¶10. (U) For additional reporting from PRT Tikrit, Salah ad Din, please see our SIPRNET Reporting Blog: <http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Tikrit>.
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